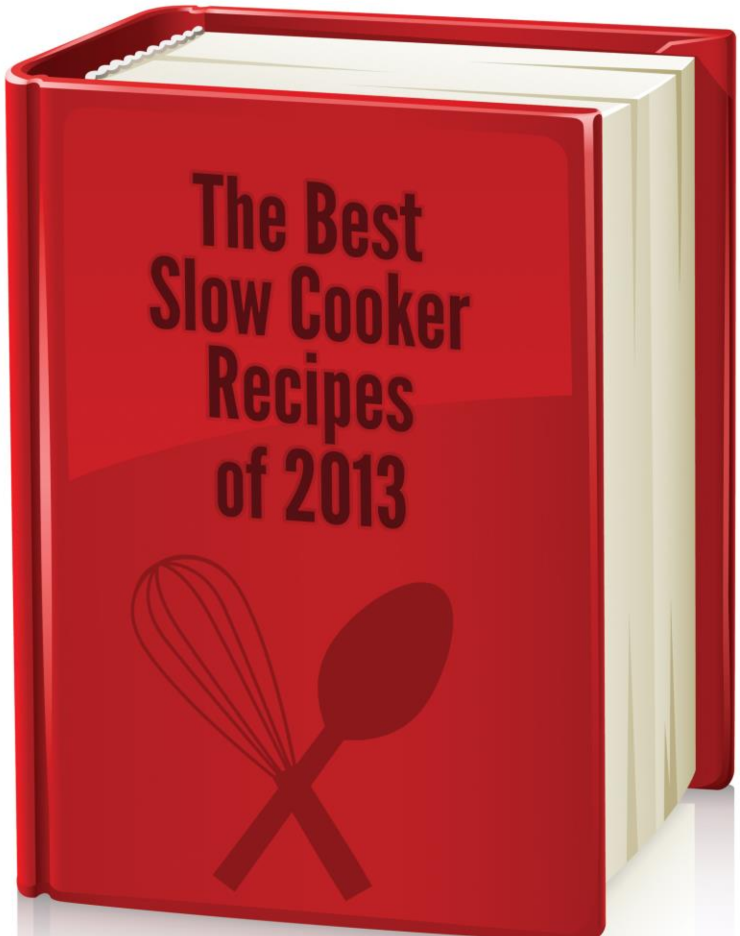


The 15 Best Slow Cooker Recipes in America,
Plus the Best Recipes from the Members and Experts at

SparkRecipes®

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The Spark: The 28-Day Breakthrough Plan for Losing Weight, Getting Fit, and Transforming Your Life ***by Chris Downie, Founder, CEO, and Motivation Expert***

The SparkPeople Cookbook: Love Your Food, Lose the Weight**, *by Chef Meg Galvin, World Master Chef and Healthy Cooking Expert at SparkPeople.com with Stepfanie Romine, editor of SparkRecipes.com***

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Photos, unless noted, from istockphoto.com

Editor: Stepfanie Romine

Cover design: Megan Patrick

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About the Contest

SparkPeople recently hosted a $10,000 Split-the-Pot Slow Cooker Recipe Contest to celebrate the relaunch of SparkRecipes.com and do our part to help alleviate hunger. We know how much our members love how easy it is to make healthy recipes using a slow cooker, and we wanted to highlight some of YOUR best recipes, so we devised a contest that would allow us to thank you for helping SparkPeople grow into the largest healthy living community in America, while also giving back to those in need.

"SparkPeople has grown to be the largest healthy living community in America thanks in large part to grass-roots support from our members," says Chris Downie, CEO and founder of SparkPeople. "With the relaunch of SparkRecipes, we wanted to not only spread the word but also thank those who've helped us grow--and in turn allow them to pay it forward to an organization in their own community. We knew our members loved slow-cooker recipes, so this contest became a way to source new content, spread the word--and help fight hunger."

After weeks of popular voting, we selected 15 finalists, then taste-tested their creations at SP HQ, judging the recipes on taste, appearance, overall healthfulness, and ease of preparation. We were thrilled to announce that **the #1 slow cooker recipe in America** is Best Buffalo Chicken Chili



It was a hit among our taste-testers:

> *"I'd definitely make this recipe for my next get-together. It had just enough kick for me, but some people might like to add a little extra hot sauce. It's great to eat as a soup, but you could also serve it as a dip with chips. Yum!"*
>
> *"This was truly an easy recipe to make. I was amazed how many produce servings made it in there, and being ground up, the chicken really gave the chili a great consistency and taste."*

The recipe's creator, Beth "Biz" Velatini, of Cary, Illinois, won $10,000: $5,000 for her and $5,000 for her favorite hunger-relief charity, Common Threads. (The other 14 finalists will receive a $100 Amazon gift card.)

Founded by chef Art Smith, who was Oprah's personal chef, and artist Jesus Salgueiro, the nonprofit has been teaching children in underserved communities how to cook healthy, affordable meals during after-school programs for the last decade. Though it started in Chicago, Common Threads is focused on a nationwide effort to get one million kids cooking in the next five years.

Beth, who has a food blog, says she has used SparkPeople to help her manage her diabetes and lose weight. She's thrilled to be helping a program she believes in, and the prize money is much appreciated--she works two jobs to make ends meet, and her husband has been unemployed and dealing with health issues.

Q&A with the Creator of the Best Slow Cooker Recipe in America

Here's what Beth had to say about winning the contest and how she plans to spend the money.*

SparkPeople*: How do you feel now that you've won this contest? Did you think you would win?*
Beth: I knew that the announcement was coming. Throughout the day I refreshed my email on my phone until I got super busy. As I headed out the door to my second job, I saw your email, and I stopped in my tracks. I turned back into my office and jumped up and down and said "I think I won $5,000 for my chili!"

SparkPeople*: What made you choose the recipe you decided to submit?*
Beth: I started making my buffalo chicken chili in January 2010. Since then, co-workers, my sister, and blog readers have made that recipe and have told me that it's won them chili cook-off contests, so I figured I would give it a go myself.

SparkPeople*: How did you come up with the recipe?*
Beth: I am an insulin-dependent diabetic, so managing my weight is important for blood sugar control. I love hot sauce, so chicken seemed an obvious choice once I decided to add Frank's Red Hot sauce.

SparkPeople*: Tell us what it means to you to earn $5,000 for your charity.*
Beth: I am so excited that Common Threads will receive $5,000. From his appearances on *Top Chef Masters*, I learned that Art Smith dropped nearly 100 pounds and figured out that chefs can lead a healthy lifestyle. His program teaches inner-city kids about growing food and healthy cooking. They can take that knowledge back to their families to show that eating healthy can be affordable and you don't have to rely on so many processed foods. I love this quote:



SparkPeople*: What are your plans for your portion of the prize money?*
Beth: I know a portion of it will be to catch up on bills. My husband and I will be celebrating our 13th wedding anniversary in December so I know we'll be having a nice dinner out somewhere. And it will be nice to buy Christmas gifts this year for our family! The rest will go into savings.

We're sharing the best 15 slow cooker recipes in America, according to those who voted in the contest, plus more than a dozen of our favorites from the cooks at SparkRecipes.com!

The Grand Prize Recipe: Best Buffalo Chicken Chili



Submitted by BIZZY319

Hands-down the best buffalo chicken chili you will ever have. The secret? Grinding your own chicken! Don't be scared!

Minutes to Prepare
15

Minutes to Cook
120

Number of Servings
10

Tips
If you don't have a food processor, simply chop up the chicken and veggies. I mention to salt at the end, because Frank's hot sauce has enough sodium for me.

Editor's note: To further reduce salt in this recipe, choose a lower-sodium hot sauce. We

recommend no salt added beans and tomatoes. To moderate the sodium levels in this and all recipes, use salt sparingly and choose low-sodium or no added salt versions of any canned or processed ingredient.

Ingredients
1 T olive oil
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 large carrots
3 stalks celery
1 large red pepper
5 cloves garlic
5 T chili powder
2 T ground cumin
1 T paprika
1/2 cup Frank's Hot Sauce
2 (15 ounce) cans no salt added tomato sauce
1 (15 ounce) can no salt added diced tomatoes
1 (15 ounce) can no salt added black beans, drained
1 (15 ounce) can chili beans in sauce (do not drain)
salt and pepper to taste

Directions
Heat your slow cooker on high. Add in olive oil. In a food processor, grind up your chicken until it is coarse like ground beef. Add chicken to slow cooker and cook for about 10 minutes. Rinse out the food processor, and add in the carrots, celery and red pepper and process until slightly chunky.

Add to ground chicken. Add remaining ingredients except salt and pepper and cook on high for 2 hours. Taste and see if it needs salt and pepper.

Serve with cilantro, sour cream, cheddar cheese or tortilla chips on the side.

Serving Size: 10 - 1 cup servings

Amount Per Serving

Calories
284.4

Total Fat
6.3 g

Cholesterol
52.0 mg

Sodium
937.1 mg

Total Carbs
34.4 g

Fiber
10.4 g

Protein
29.0 g

About Common Threads

Founded in 2003 by Chef Art Smith and artist Jesus Salgueiro, Common Threads has been teaching children living in underserved communities how to cook wholesome, healthy meals in professional led, curriculum-based after-school programs for 10 years. Students learn about grains, protein, fruits, and vegetables as they chop, slice, and bake their way to a healthy affordable meal. Students gain serious culinary skills, a taste for healthy food from different countries, and the confidence to make healthy choices about what they eat.

Common Threads began out of our love for family and good food, two basic ingredients that link all people of this world together. Family nurtures us, protects us, and connects us to a larger community. Food nourishes us, excites us, and teaches us about the world around us.

In 2013, Common Threads is taking bold steps to use the kitchen as a catalyst for change. We are launching a nationwide effort to get one million kids cooking in the next five years.



The Runners-Up

Slow Cooker Taco Chicken Chili



Submitted by TABLERECIPES

A flavorful and easy chicken slow cooker recipe. Seasoned with chili and taco spices, this is a perfect healthy meal for the fall and winter.

Minutes to Prepare
5

Minutes to Cook
240

Number of Servings
8

Ingredients
6 boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 (15 ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 (15 ounce) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup tomato sauce
1 (15 ounce) can corn, drained
2 (14.5 ounce) cans diced tomatoes
1 packet taco seasoning
3 t cumin
1/2 t cayenne pepper (optional)
1 T chili powder

Directions
In a large crock-pot, add all of the ingredients and stir. Draining and rinsing the beans is not necessary, but it will help cut down on the amount of liquid in the crock-pot later on.

Cook on high approximately 4 hours or on low 6-8 hours, until done.

Remove the chicken breasts and shred. Return the chicken to the crock-pot and cook for an additional 20 minutes. This will allow the shredded chicken to absorb a bit more of the liquid.

Serve over rice and enjoy!

Serving Size: makes 8 1.5-cup servings

Amount Per Serving

Calories
315.9

Total Fat
2.2 g

Cholesterol
67.5 mg

Sodium
748.3 mg

Total Carbs
36.3 g

Fiber
11.3 g

Protein
37.8 g

Creamy Tri-Mushroom Soup



Submitted by YOSHI80

This incredibly easy and delicious mushroom soup is naturally thickened by blending the soup. No need to make a roux. The soup gets its creaminess from a bit of Neufchatel cheese (which has 1/3 less fat than cream cheese) and Greek yogurt.

Minutes to Prepare
10

Minutes to Cook
240

Number of Servings
6

Tips
If you don't have an immersion blender, you can carefully ladle the soup into a regular blender.

Neufchatel cheese is reduced-fat cream cheese, and it is usually found next to the cream cheese in the refrigerated dairy section of your grocery store.

Ingredients
1 pound white mushrooms, sliced

1/2 pound baby bella mushrooms, sliced
1/2 pound fresh shiitake mushrooms, sliced
1 yellow onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 T chopped fresh thyme leaves
6 cups low-sodium chicken stock
2 T dry sherry
2 ounces Neufchatel cheese, softened
2 T Greek yogurt
Kosher salt & freshly cracked black pepper, to taste

Directions
Place all the mushrooms, onion, celery, garlic, 1 tablespoon of thyme, chicken stock, and dry sherry in a 5-quart slow cooker. Cook on high heat for 4 hours.

Add the Neufchatel cheese and Greek yogurt. Using an immersion blender, carefully blend the soup until desired consistency. You can blend it completely smooth or blend it until slightly chunky. Season with kosher salt & freshly cracked black pepper, to taste.

Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with the remaining 1 tablespoon of thyme leaves.

Serving Size: 1 cup
Amount Per Serving

Calories
113.0

Total Fat
2.3 g

Cholesterol
7.2 mg

Sodium
704.3 mg

Total Carbs
11.4 g

Fiber
2.8 g

Protein
10.1 g

Creamy White Bean Avocado Soup



Submitted by ISABELMINUNNI

A comfort food that is healthy and delicious! You can't ask for more from a recipe!

Minutes to Prepare
10

Minutes to Cook
240

Number of Servings
6

Ingredients
4 (15 ounce) cans white kidney (cannellini) beans
4 avocados, diced
1 large onion, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
1/2 red bell pepper, diced
1 cup frozen corn
8 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 large tomato, diced
1/3 cup fat-free Greek yogurt

Directions
Puree 1 can of beans and 2 avocados with 1 cup broth until smooth.

Add to the slow cooker with the remaining ingredients except the tomato and yogurt.

Cook on high for 4 hours.

Serve with a dollop of yogurt and diced tomatoes. Enjoy!

Serving Size: 1 1/2 cups

Amount Per Serving

Calories
255.8

Total Fat
3.8 g

Cholesterol
0.0 mg

Sodium
792.3 mg

Total Carbs
43.1 g

Fiber
8.9 g

Protein
16.0 g

Slow Cooker Pot Roast



Submitted by BLOWE42

Using the umami boost of soy sauce enhances the flavor of this simple recipe.

Minutes to Prepare
15

Minutes to Cook
480

Number of Servings
16

Tips
Your roast will be so tender you can cut it with a fork. The juice is so delicious you can use it instead of gravy.

Ingredients
4 pounds beef round, rump, chuck, or sirloin roast
1 T garlic powder
1/2 T black pepper
1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 cup soy sauce
1 cup water
6 small red potatoes, cut in half
1/2 pound bag baby-cut carrots

3 celery large stalks, chopped
1 medium onion cut in quarters

Directions
Season the roast with garlic powder and pepper.

Heat the oil in a large skillet, add the roast and brown it on all sides.

Place the roast in a slow cooker with the water, soy sauce, and chopped onion. Cook for 8-10 hours on low. Add the vegetables 1 to 1 1/2 hours before the roast is done.

Serving Size: 3 ounces meat, 1/2 cup vegetables
Amount Per Serving

Calories
425.6

Total Fat
25.6 g

Cholesterol
68.0 mg

Sodium
390.3 mg

Total Carbs
13.0 g

Fiber
1.6 g

Protein
34.0 g

Creamy Chicken Enchilada Stew



Submitted by PAMELAVACHON

All of the flavor of saucy and tangy chicken enchiladas is packed into a hearty, guilt-free stew. The tortillas go right into the slow cooker and melt into the stew for flavor and texture.

Minutes to Prepare
20

Minutes to Cook
150

Number of Servings
4

Ingredients
1 T canola oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1 medium yellow onion, diced
1 1/2 t chili powder
1 t cumin
12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces
Juice from 1 lime

1/2 t lime zest
32 ounces (1 quart) low-sodium chicken broth,
1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
1 (4 ounce) can diced green chilies
4 6-inch soft corn tortillas
1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream
1 scallion, sliced
1/4 cup reduced-fat shredded cheddar cheese

Directions
Preheat slow cooker to high setting. Add the canola oil, onions, garlic, chili powder, and cumin, and allow to cook, uncovered, for 10 minutes until the onions become translucent.

Add all remaining ingredients to the crock pot except sour cream, scallions, and cheddar cheese. Stir to combine. Cover, and cook on high heat for about 2 hours, until chicken is cooked through.

Add sour cream to mixture and stir to combine. Continue cooking for another 15 minutes until the sour cream is warmed through.

Serve, garnished with sliced scallions and cheddar cheese.

Serving Size: 4 meal-sized servings or 6 as a first course

Amount Per Serving

Calories
281.2

Total Fat
11.3 g

Cholesterol
65.5 mg

Sodium
1,328.7 mg

Total Carbs
23.1 g

Fiber
4.7 g

Protein
24.0 g

Coconut Chickpea Chicken Curry



Recipe and photo submitted by AASHOOTS

Bring the flavors of a Thai kitchen right into your slow cooker! This simple and vibrant dish will have your taste buds dancing.

Minutes to Prepare
10

Minutes to Cook
240

Number of Servings
6

Tips
Save time by buying a premixed curry spice blend.

Ingredients
Spice Mixture:
1 t salt
1 t black pepper
1/2 t ground coriander
1/2 t cumin
1/2 t cardamom

1/2 t chili powder
1/2 t turmeric
1/2 t cayenne
1/4 t cinnamon
1 T curry powder

1 pound chicken breast, cut into 1-inch pieces
14 ounces light coconut milk
1 cup chicken stock
2 t fish sauce
2 T green curry paste
1 T corn starch
1 (15 ounce) can drained chickpeas
1/2 yellow onion, thinly sliced
3 cloves garlic, very thinly sliced
1 small chili or jalapeno, seeded and minced
1 T grated ginger
1 cup cashews, divided – 1/4 cup reserved for garnish (toasted)
1 cup bean sprouts
3 T fresh chopped basil
1 lime, cut into wedges

4 cups cooked brown rice

Directions
Mix together spices, then toss chicken pieces thoroughly in mixture.

In the bottom of the slow cooker, whisk together the coconut milk, chicken stock, fish sauce, green curry paste, and cornstarch, then add the chicken.

Add the chickpeas, onions, garlic, jalapeno, ginger and 3/4 cup cashews.

Cook on low for 8 hours, or on high for 4 hours.

Toast the remaining cashews in a 400 degree oven just until fragrant (three to five minutes).

When ready to serve, top the brown rice with the chicken curry then cashews, basil, bean sprouts and a lime wedge.

Serving Size: 1 1/2 cups (including rice)

Amount Per Serving

Calories
395.5

Total Fat
14.1 g

Cholesterol
48.0 mg

Sodium
786.1 mg

Total Carbs
41.0 g

Fiber
5.4 g

Protein
26.3 g

Alaskan Hunter Stew



Submitted by WILLOWISPSOLO

We used to make this recipe with moose or caribou and cooked it in a cast iron stew pot in the oven on very low heat, before the days of crock pots. It lends itself very well to lean cuts of beef with little fat and is great for entertaining during football season!

Minutes to Prepare
20

Minutes to Cook
270

Number of Servings
6

Tips
This is a very low-fat recipe and has a lot of fiber and vitamins from the root veggies. I have also added up to a cup of turnips, golden beets or rutabagas. This is a great way to work "unpopular" veggies into your diet. I prefer the low-sodium onion soup mix, too.

Ingredients
1 1/4 pounds extra lean beef stew meat (or game meat)
1 packet onion soup mix

1/3 cup dried cranberries
1 3/4 cups chopped onion
1 cup chopped celery
1 pint dark beer such as porter
2 T balsamic vinegar
1/4 t coarse-ground black pepper

2 cups cubed butternut squash
1 1/2 cups cubed red or gold potatoes
1 cup sliced carrots

1 1/2 ounces good quality bourbon
1 T cornstarch
1/4 cup water
1/2 cup frozen peas, thawed

Directions
Put the first eight ingredients in a 4-quart crock pot and cook on low for about three hours. This recipe was designed for game meat, so the acid in the beer and long, slow cooking time is important to tenderize the meat.

After three hours, stir the meat and add the vegetables. Turn the crock pot to high and cook for about an hour, until the vegetables are just tender.

Mix the bourbon, water and cornstarch and add to crock pot, stirring well. Turn crock pot back to low, and simmer for about 30 minutes, or until the sauce has thickened. Add peas, if desired, just before serving for a bright burst of color.

Serving Size: 1 1/2 cups

Amount Per Serving

Calories
346.7

Total Fat
4.7 g

Cholesterol
64.6 mg

Sodium
519.5 mg

Total Carbs
31.6 g

Fiber
5.7 g

Protein
28.9 g

Firecracker Chicken and Sausage Quinoa



Submitted by RACHRUIZ1

A flavorful slow-cooked chili-garlic quinoa with chunks of chicken and sausage. Delicious!

Minutes to Prepare
15

Minutes to Cook
120

Number of Servings
8

Ingredients
1 link lean turkey kielbasa, sliced
1 boneless, skinless chicken breast, cubed
2 cups quinoa, rinsed
3 T chili garlic paste
2 t jarred sliced lemongrass
1 t garlic powder

1/2 t crushed red pepper flakes
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 small yellow onion, chopped
1 small orange bell pepper, chopped
1/2 cup finely chopped kale
2 cups tomato juice
2 cups chicken broth
6 small whole dried chili peppers
4 green onions, trimmed and sliced (optional)

Directions
Combine all ingredients in the bowl of a slow-cooker.

Cover and turn slow-cooker to high. Cook 2-3 hours, stirring occasionally, until quinoa is fluffy, liquids are absorbed, and chicken is cooked through. Turn slow-cooker to warm.

Serve warm with a sprinkle of green onion.

Serving Size: 3/4 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
268.6

Total Fat
5.1 g

Cholesterol
26.6 mg

Sodium
709.0 mg

Total Carbs
40.8 g

Fiber
4.3 g

Protein
15.0 g

Holy Smokes Chili



Submitted by LOLLY7216

This recipe, while very simple, is full of fresh flavor. My dad and I won a church chili cook-off with this recipe! The Italian sausage and jalapenos give it a subtle heat without the full burn of some chilies. Enjoy!

Minutes to Prepare
20

Minutes to Cook
180

Number of Servings
12

Tips
This is soup-er easy (pun intended). You really can't mess this recipe up. Serve with a piece of cornbread, and garnish with cheese and sour cream if desired. Enjoy!

Ingredients
1 pound ground chuck
3/4 pound hot Italian sausage
1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 green bell pepper, chopped
2 jalapeno peppers, chopped
2 large cans crushed tomatoes
1 (15.5 ounce) can black beans
1 (15.5 ounce) can dark red kidney beans

Directions
In a large skillet set over medium-high heat, brown the beef and sausage with the onion and peppers. Drain off any fat. Put the meat mixture in a crock pot and add the tomatoes and beans (drain most but not all the liquid from the beans). Stir to mix. Cook on high for three hours. Salt and pepper to taste before serving.

Serving Size: 1 to 1 1/2 cups per serving

Amount Per Serving

Calories
273.6

Total Fat
13.9 g

Cholesterol
43.3 mg

Sodium
849.7 mg

Total Carbs
21.6 g

Fiber
5.6 g

Protein
16.7 g

Slow Cooker Quinoa Chili



Submitted by THEHIVE

I’m not sure whether I’d call this Quinoa Chicken Chili or Quinoa Taco Soup. Either way, I’d call it scrumptious. It's a very hearty chili, high in protein and nutrition.

Minutes to Prepare
15

Minutes to Cook
480

Number of Servings
10

Ingredients
1 cup quinoa, rinsed
1 (28 ounce) can diced tomatoes (you could use crushed)
1 (14 ounce) can diced tomatoes with green chilies (Rotel)
2 (15 ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
1 (15 ounce) can corn, drained
3 cups chicken stock
2 large chicken breasts (about 12 ounces) (Editor's Note: You could also use beef, as shown in the photo above)
1 t garlic powder
2 t cumin
1 t crushed red pepper

2 t chili powder

Directions
Toss all ingredients into the slow cooker and cook on low for 6-8 hours or high for 4-7 hours. Before serving, remove the chicken and shred with two forks, then return to the slow cooker.

Top with cheese, sour cream, avocados, chips or whatever sounds good to you.

Serving Size: 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
192.9

Total Fat
1.5 g

Cholesterol
20.7 mg

Sodium
703.4 mg

Total Carbs
32.5 g

Fiber
7.4 g

Protein
15.5 g

Southwest Quinoa Power Hash



Submitted by RENAE_M_H

This is a slow-cooked vegetarian meal, or a side full of "power foods" to keep you going.

Minutes to Prepare
30

Minutes to Cook
180

Number of Servings
6

Tips
If you want a little extra protein, I've added a rotisserie chicken just before serving, yum!

Ingredients
1 cup quinoa rinsed and drained
2 cups vegetable broth, or water
1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
1 1/2 cups salsa
1 medium sweet potato

1 cup frozen corn
1/2 red onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 T ground cumin
1 T paprika
1 bunch kale, ribs removed and coarsely chopped
salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Directions
Add all ingredients, except Parmesan, to slow cooker and stir. Cook on low for 4 hours, or high for 2, or until the quinoa has softened. Top with Parmesan and enjoy!

Serving Size: about 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
246.1

Total Fat
4.2 g

Cholesterol
4.3 mg

Sodium
653.6 mg

Total Carbs
45.5 g

Fiber
6.5 g

Protein
10.7 g

Homemade Minestrone Soup



Submitted by ROMANTILLY

This is a recipe I came across while living in Italy many years ago. I have added some of my favorite vegetables to it to "beef" it up and make it heartier. It is one of my family's favorites, great for a cold fall or winter night.

Minutes to Prepare
10

Minutes to Cook
300

Number of Servings
8

Tips
I put everything in the slow cooker in the morning, including the rind from the Parmesan Cheese. In the afternoon, I add the pasta. I let it simmer another 2 hours. This dish is even better warmed up the next day after the flavors have had time to meld together.

Ingredients
3 T extra virgin olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
1 yellow or red bell pepper, chopped
1 green bell pepper, chopped
2 large carrots, chopped

2 stalks celery, chopped
1 cup chopped Russet potatoes
2 cups chopped zucchini
1 cup fresh or frozen green beans (or 1 15 ounce can no salt added green beans)
1 cup mushrooms, stems removed and sliced
1 (15 ounce) can cannellini or great northern beans (low sodium)
1 (15 ounce) can dark red or light red kidney beans (low sodium)
2 cups shredded red cabbage
1 (28 ounce) can no salt added Italian-style tomatoes, crushed or diced
1 wedge Parmesan cheese, rind cleaned and removed
8 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
1 cup whole wheat pasta (small pasta)
2 cloves garlic (or 1 T minced garlic)
1 T fresh basil
1 T fresh sage (or 1 1/2 t dried)
1 T fresh oregano (or 1 1/2 t dried)

Directions
Combine all ingredients except the Parmesan cheese (but add the rind) in the slow cooker, and simmer on low 10 to 12 hours or high 5 to 7 hours. Discard the rind before serving. Grate the parmesan and sprinkle 1 teaspoon on top of each serving. Serve with fresh whole wheat Italian bread or crostini.

Serving Size: 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
232.4

Total Fat
7.8 g

Cholesterol
4.8 mg

Sodium
464.3 mg

Total Carbs
34.5 g

Fiber
8.8 g

Protein
8.2 g

Our Most Popular Slow Cooker Recipes

Slow-Cooker Salsa Chicken



This is THE most popular recipe on SparkRecipes. We've added more vegetables and reduced the sodium drastically to make it even better.

Minutes to Prepare
5

Minutes to Cook
480

Number of Servings
8

Tips
This recipe is part of *The SparkPeople Cookbook: Love Your Food, Lose The Weight*.

Ingredients
2 pounds (32 ounces) chicken breasts, boneless and skinless
1 cup salsa, homemade or purchased
1 cup petite diced canned tomatoes (choose low-sodium)
2 T Taco Seasoning
1 cup onions, diced fine

1/2 cup celery diced fine
1/2 cup carrots, shredded
3 T sour cream, reduced fat

Directions
Birdie, one of our most successful members to date, is a doctor and mother of five. Having lost 143 pounds on SparkPeople, she is always on the lookout for healthy recipe ideas, but they have to be quick and easy. "I'm not a good cook," she confesses, but this is one dish she serves regularly without worry. She's not the only member who's making this for dinner: the recipe has been rated more than 2,700 times!

Salsa Chicken is easy to make; just put all the ingredients in a slow cooker and let the machine do the work. There are infinite variations, and your family is guaranteed to like each one.

Place the chicken in a slow cooker. Sprinkle the taco seasoning over the meat then layer the vegetables and salsa on top. Pour a half cup of water over the mixture, set on low and cook for 6-8 hours. The meat is cooked when it shreds or reaches an internal temperature of 165°F. When ready to serve, break up the chicken with two forks then stir in the sour cream.

Serving Size: 1 Cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
164.9

Total Fat
2.5 g

Cholesterol
67.9 mg

Sodium
253.3 mg

Total Carbs
7.3 g

Fiber
2.1 g

Protein
27.6 g

Slow Cooker Lasagna



What a great dish for one of those nights when your kids have a late soccer game! Brown the meat, layer in the ingredients, set your slow cooker on low, and go!

Minutes to Prepare
15

Minutes to Cook
240

Number of Servings
8

Tips
Please note that the cooking time should not exceed 4 hours. This is not an "all day" slow-cooker meal.

Ingredients
1 pound ground beef, 96% lean
1⁄4 t red pepper flakes
2 t dried thyme
1 (24-ounce) jar low-sodium marinara sauce
1 large eggplant, unpeeled, diced, about 2 cups
15 ounces part-skim ricotta cheese
1 cup shredded Italian five-cheese blend (see Note)

1⁄4 cup egg substitute (or 1 egg white)
1 T chopped fresh parsley
6 no-boil lasagna noodles

Directions
In a skillet over moderate heat, brown the ground beef and drain any excess fat. Stir in red pepper flakes, thyme, tomato sauce, eggplant, and 1 1⁄4 cup water.

In a mixing bowl, combine the ricotta, shredded cheese blend, egg substitute, and parsley.

Coat the inside of the slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Place enough meat sauce in the slow cooker to cover the bottom. Top with 2 or 3 lasagna noodles (break them up as needed) to cover the meat sauce. Repeat layer.

Top the second layer with all of the cheese mixture and finish with a top layer of the remaining meat sauce.

Cover and set the slow cooker on low. Cook for 3 1⁄2 to 4 hours.

Note: If you can't find the Italian five-cheese blend, shredded part-skim mozzarella will work just fine.

Serving Size: About 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
271.4

Total Fat
10.2 g

Cholesterol
56.5 mg

Sodium
284.4 mg

Total Carbs
18.1 g

Fiber
1.6 g

Protein
24.9 g

Slow Cooker Marinara Chicken and Vegetables



Chef Meg made over a versatile member recipe by adding extra vegetables and reducing the sodium. Serve with a side salad or over whole wheat pasta or brown rice.

Minutes to Prepare
5

Minutes to Cook
360

Number of Servings
8

Tips
Like this recipe? It's from "The SparkPeople Cookbook: Love Your Food, Lose the Weight." Click here for more info.

Ingredients
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
4 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
4 tomatoes, chopped or one 14.5-ounce can low-sodium tomatoes, drained
4 medium ribs celery, diced (1 cup)
2 small zucchini, diced (2 cups)
1 bell pepper, cored, seeded, and diced
One 18-ounce jar low-sodium marinara
sauce

1 t dried basil
1 t dried thyme

Directions
Place the chicken in the slow cooker; add the garlic, tomatoes, celery, zucchini, and pepper. Pour the marinara sauce over all, and sprinkle the basil and thyme on top.

Set the slow cooker on low and cook for 6 to 7 hours. Before serving, shred the chicken with a fork.

Serving Size: about 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
175.9

Total Fat
3.6 g

Cholesterol
70.1 mg

Sodium
130.2 mg

Total Carbs
7.9 g

Fiber
1.8 g

Protein
27.0 g

Slow Cooker Creamy Italian Chicken



Six ingredients, 5 minutes of hands-on cooking, and dinner is served!

Minutes to Prepare
5

Minutes to Cook
240

Number of Servings
6

Ingredients
2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 packet Italian dressing mix
1/2 cup water
1 (8-ounce) package reduced-fat cream cheese
1 can 98% fat free cream of chicken soup
3 cups cooked long grain rice (white or brown)

Directions
Place chicken in crock pot.

Mix together Italian dressing mix and water. Pour over chicken.

Cover and cook on high for 4 hours OR low for 8 hours.

Mix together cream cheese and soup in separate bowl.

Carefully remove chicken from crock pot to plate.

Pour cream cheese/soup mixture into crock pot and mix together with dressing in bottom.

Return chicken to crock pot and mix gently to shred the chicken. Cook on LOW until heated through.

Serve with rice or noodles.

You may add skim or low fat milk in very small quantities to thin the sauce a little. It does not significantly affect the nutritional value if you use up to 2 Tablespoons**

This recipe can be made with fat-free cream cheese and it saves about 6 grams of fat. However, I feel that the dish benefits from the flavor of the low-fat over the fat-free.

Serving Size: Approximately 2/3 cup mixture with 1/2 cup rice

Amount Per Serving

Calories
385.4

Total Fat
12.5 g

Cholesterol
121.5 mg

Sodium
720.2 mg

Total Carbs
24.1 g

Fiber
0.9 g

Protein
41.0 g

Slow Cooker BBQ Pulled Pork Roast



Submitted by SLCOLMAN

A very easy way to make pulled pork in the slow cooker. This is a tangy BBQ type sauce.

Minutes to Prepare
10

Minutes to Cook
360

Number of Servings
12

Ingredients
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup chopped onions
1 cup ketchup
1 cup barbecue sauce
1 cup water
2 T vinegar
2 T Worcestershire sauce
2 T brown sugar
1 t chili powder
1 t salt

1/2 t pepper
1/2 t garlic powder
3 pounds boneless pork roast

Directions
Combine all ingredients except roast in the slow cooker.
Add the roast.
Cover, cook on high for 6-7 hours.
Remove the roast.
Shred the meat, and return it to the sauce.
If desired, thicken the sauce by simmering on the stovetop.
Great for making sandwiches or using in other recipes. The sauce is good on rice, too.

Serving Size: 1/2 to 3/4 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
296.9

Total Fat
11.9 g

Cholesterol
80.5 mg

Sodium
650.8 mg

Total Carbs
12.3 g

Fiber
0.7 g

Protein
32.4 g

Slow Cooker Provencal Chicken and Beans



Submitted by CHEF_MEG

This is a great recipe to use as a basis for plenty of meals!

Minutes to Prepare
5

Minutes to Cook
420

Number of Servings
6

Tips
Pair this with a green salad and you'll have a fast and tasty lunch or a movie or game night snack. Use baked chips to cut calories!

Ingredients
24 oz boneless, skinless chicken breast
1 yellow bell pepper, diced
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 (16 ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 (14.5 oz) can petite diced tomatoes with basil and oregano or any style of canned tomatoes
1 dash salt
1 dash black pepper
2 t dried basil
1 t dried thyme

Directions
Place all ingredients into a slow cooker, stir and cover with lid; cook on low heat for 7 hours. If you are running late, the mixture will hold for 8 hours, so don't rush.

Serving Size: 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
225.4

Total Fat
3.2 g

Cholesterol
70.2 mg

Sodium
829.3 mg

Total Carbs
19.8 g

Fiber
4.9 g

Protein
29.7 g

Easy Slow Cooker Lemony Garlic Chicken Breast



Submitted by FLYAWAYFREE

Tasty and nutritious, this slow cooker recipe will be a family favorite.

Minutes to Prepare
10

Minutes to Cook
360

Number of Servings
6

Ingredients
1 t oregano
1/4 t black pepper

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts (six halves)
1 T olive oil
1/4 cup water
3 T lemon juice
2 t minced garlic
1 t chicken bouillon granules
1 t parsley

Directions
Mix oregano and pepper and sprinkle evenly over chicken pieces.
In a large non-stick skillet, using medium heat, brown chicken evenly on both sides in olive oil.
Mix remaining ingredients and pour over chicken, bringing mixture to a gentle boil.
Pour skillet contents into slow cooker, cover, and cook on low for 6 hours (3 hours on high).
Chicken is very tasty served on a bed of brown rice with steamed carrots!

Serving Size: 1/2 chicken breast

Amount Per Serving

Calories
167.8

Total Fat
5.6 g

Cholesterol
73.2 mg

Sodium
127.6 mg

Total Carbs
0.9 g

Fiber
0.2 g

Protein
27.0 g

Slow Cooker Vegetable Curry



Submitted by CHEF_MEG

Slow cookers aren't just for meat! This is a tasty, affordable one-pot vegetarian meal that's filling and perfect for your slow cooker.

Minutes to Prepare
15

Minutes to Cook
360

Number of Servings
8

Tips
You can also add shrimp during the last 20 minutes of cooking, if you like. If the dish is a little too spicy for the kids, add 1 tablespoon of plain yogurt to their serving. Serve with a glass of milk and a cucumber salad.

Ingredients
1 T canola oil
4 medium carrots (about 2 cups), sliced 1⁄4-inch thick
1 onion, thinly sliced

3 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
2 T curry powder
1⁄2 t cayenne
1⁄2 t turmeric
4 to 5 Yukon Gold or red potatoes, quartered
8 ounces fresh or frozen green beans
3 cups canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
2 large tomatoes, diced (1 cup)
2 cups vegetable stock
1⁄2 cup frozen peas
1⁄2 cup light coconut milk

Directions
In a sauté pan, heat the oil until moderately hot. Add the carrots and onion and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic, curry powder, cayenne, and turmeric to the pan. Continue to cook for 2 minutes more or until the spices become fragrant.
Remove the vegetables from the pan and transfer to a slow cooker. Add the potatoes, green beans, chickpeas, tomatoes, and vegetable stock to the slow cooker.
Set the slow cooker on low and cook for 5 1⁄2 hours. Add the peas and coconut milk and cook for 15 minutes more.

Serving Size: 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
178.0

Total Fat
3.2 g

Cholesterol
0.0 mg

Sodium
398.1 mg

Total Carbs
30.6 g

Fiber
8.2 g

Protein
7.0 g

Slow Cooker Pork with Greens and Beans



My kids never complain about eating both beans and greens in one meal when they're served alongside rich, slow-cooked pork.

Submitted by CHEF_MEG

Minutes to Prepare
5

Minutes to Cook
360

Number of Servings
8

Tips
Pepitas are shelled pumpkin seeds, which you can find in the nuts aisle.

Chef Meg used Boston Butt roast, which actually comes from the shoulder area of a pig.

Escarole, also called endive, is a sturdy green that stands up well in slow-cooking dishes. You

could also use kale or another sturdy green.

Cannellini beans are white kidney beans that are popular in Italian cooking. Use canned for convenience, but drain and rinse them to control the salt. Use Great Northern beans if you can't find cannellini beans.

Pepitas are shelled pumpkin seeds. You can omit them from the recipe if you can't find them.

Try adding an additional one or two cups of stock during the last hour and instead of a slow stew, you have a great hearty soup.

Serve this dish with chunks of whole-wheat bread to sop up the tasty broth. This meal is so packed full of flavor, your family will forget they're eating healthful, fiber-rich beans and dark, leafy greens, a great source of antioxidants.

Ingredients
Spice rub:
1 T chili powder
1/2 t red pepper flakes
1/2 t kosher or sea salt

2 pounds pork shoulder, visible fat removed

3 cloves garlic, halved
1 cup chicken stock, low sodium
1 (14.5-ounce) can low-sodium diced tomatoes
2 (14.5-ounce) cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
2 cups escarole or kale, chopped

1/2 cup pepitas

Directions
Prepare the spice rub by combining the chili powder, red pepper and salt.

Rub over the pork shoulder 1 hour before cooking or the night before.

Refrigerate the meat until ready to cook.

Place the pork in a slow cooker with the garlic.

Pour the stock over the meat. Cook on low for 5-6 hours.

Remove the lid and break up the meat into large chunks.

Add the diced tomatoes, beans and kale. Cook for another hour.

Before serving, toast the pepitas in a dry skillet.

Serve the stew warm, topped with the pepitas.

Serving Size: 1 cup with 1 tablespoon pepitas as a garnish.

Amount Per Serving

Calories
285.9

Total Fat
15.6 g

Cholesterol
72.2 mg

Sodium
408.3 mg

Total Carbs
11.7 g

Fiber
3.6 g

Protein
25.9 g

Slow Cooker Healthy Potato Soup



Submitted by JHENGESH

Cook in the crock pot all day, add the evaporated milk, and it's ready to go!

Minutes to Prepare
10

Minutes to Cook
600

Number of Servings
15

Ingredients
6 large potatoes, cubed
3 large carrots, sliced
3 stalks celery, chopped
2 onions, chopped
4 chicken bouillon cubes
6 cups of water

1 can nonfat evaporated milk
shredded cheddar cheese (optional, not in calculation)

Directions
Combine all vegetables, bouillon, and water in large crock pot.

Cook on low for 8-10 hours, or high 3-4. Add evaporated milk, stir till heated through, and serve.

Serve with shredded cheddar cheese, if desired.

Serving Size: 1 cup.

Amount Per Serving

Calories
136.6

Total Fat
0.3 g

Cholesterol
1.0 mg

Sodium
265.6 mg

Total Carbs
29.3 g

Fiber
4.5 g

Protein
4.7 g

Slow Cooker Ham and Scalloped Potatoes



Submitted by SHANNJ77

Minutes to Prepare
20

Minutes to Cook
600

Number of Servings
8

Ingredients
1 1/2 pounds 98% fat-free ham, cut into 8 slices
8-10 medium potatoes, thinly sliced
2 onions, peeled and thinly sliced
1/2 t salt
1/4 t black pepper, or more according to taste
1 cup fat-free shredded cheddar cheese
1 (10.75 ounce) can 98% fat-free cream of celery soup
paprika

Directions
Layer half of ham, potatoes, and onions in slow cooker.

Sprinkle with half the salt and pepper, and then half the shredded cheese.
Repeat layers.
Spoon soup over ingredients.
Cook on low 8-10 hour or high 4 hours.

Serving Size: about 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
286.4

Total Fat
2.5 g

Cholesterol
33.3 mg

Sodium
1,521.9 mg

Total Carbs
46.0 g

Fiber
5.6 g

Protein
24.6 g

Easy Slow Cooker Beef and Mushrooms



Submitted by -AMANDA79-

This easy crock pot meal tastes great over brown rice (not included in calorie count).

Minutes to Prepare
15

Minutes to Cook
240

Number of Servings
4

Ingredients
1 pound lean beef stew meat
1 can low-fat cream of mushroom soup
1/2 cup water
1 packet dry onion soup mix
8 ounces fresh mushrooms (whole or sliced, your preference)

Directions

Brown meat in skillet over med-high heat. You can skip this step to save time and the recipe will still be great. I just think it gives the meat more flavor and helps it hold together better. Place meat in 4 quart crock pot. Place mushrooms on top of beef. Combine soup, water and soup mix and pour over mushrooms and beef. Cook on low for 6-8 hours or high for 3-4 hours.

Serving Size: 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
214.0

Total Fat
6.0 g

Cholesterol
71.2 mg

Sodium
976.1 mg

Total Carbs
12.4 g

Fiber
1.7 g

Protein
26.9 g

Slow Cooker Rotisserie Chicken



Submitted by CHEF_MEG

Those rotisserie chickens from the supermarket are a busy cook's best friend. When you have time to plan ahead, make your own--in your slow cooker!

Minutes to Prepare
10

Minutes to Cook
240

Number of Servings
4

Tips
Lifting the whole chicken up off the bottom of the slow cooker insert will keep air flowing all around the bird and let most of the fat fall to the bottom of the slow cooker.

You might not need a knife to carve this chicken once cooked--the meat will almost fall off the bone.

You can use other herbs and spices, if you prefer.

Ingredients
1 lemon, cut in half
1 t dried thyme
1/4 t black pepper
1 whole chicken, (about 4 1/2 pounds)

Directions
Place an inverted shallow ceramic dish (one that is oven-proof) into the bottom of your slow cooker insert. Your chicken should be able to fit on top and still allow the lid to close tightly.

In a small dish, squeeze the juice from half the lemon, then stir in the thyme and pepper.

Starting at the tail end of the bird (the end where the legs are), slide your fingers between the breast and the skin. Loosen the skin from the flesh as you work your way to the neck end. Once the skin is loosened from the breast, cut it off and removing any fat, using kitchen shears if necessary. Continue the process with the skin over the legs. Discard the skin.

Place the remaining 1/2 lemon into the cavity of the chicken, along with 1/4 of the herbed lemon juice.

Cross the legs of the chicken, then tie them together with cotton kitchen string.

Place the chicken in the slow cooker, atop the inverted dish.

Coat the top of the chicken with cooking spray.

Spoon the remaining herb mixture over the top and sides of the chicken.

Cover and set on low. Cook at least 4 but up to 8 hours, until temperature of the inner part of the chicken thigh reaches 170 degrees.

Transfer chicken to cutting board, let rest for 15 minutes, then remove the meat from the bones.

Serving Size: One 4 1/2 pound chicken yields almost 10 ounces cooked dark meat and 16 ounces cooked white meat. Approximately 2 ounces dark meat and 4 ounces of white meat per serving.

Amount Per Serving

Calories
277.8

Total Fat
11.9 g

Cholesterol
129.7 mg

Sodium
283.6 mg

Total Carbs
2.9 g

Fiber
1.2 g

Protein
41.7 g

Apple-Cinnamon Slow Cooker Oatmeal



Submitted by CHEF_MEG

Start the day off right with sweet and creamy slow cooker oats for breakfast. The evaporated milk adds such creaminess that you'll think you're having pudding for breakfast.

Minutes to Prepare
5

Minutes to Cook
480

Number of Servings
6

Tips
Add raisins, honey, ground flaxseed or chopped walnuts before serving, if desired.

Ingredients
2 cups rolled oats
1 t cinnamon
2 Granny Smith apples, peeled and diced
1/2 cup evaporated 2% milk

Directions

Coat the inside of a slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Add all the ingredients to the slow cooker, then pour in 6 cups of water. Cover and set on low heat for 8-9 hours.

Serving Size: 1 cup

Amount Per Serving

Calories
167.8

Total Fat
3.0 g

Cholesterol
3.3 mg

Sodium
142.6 mg

Total Carbs
30.7 g

Fiber
4.5 g

Protein
5.7 g

Slow Cooker Pork Chops with Fruity Stuffing



Submitted by LYNDSAY81283

These stuffed pork chops are comfort food at its finest. Better yet, you only need to do about 15 minutes of work!

Minutes to Prepare
15

Minutes to Cook
400

Number of Servings
6

Ingredients
1 package (6 ounces) herb stuffing mix
2 celery stalks, chopped (1 cup)
1 medium apple, chopped (1 cup)
1 large onion, chopped (1 cup)
1/2 cup dried cherries
1 cup fat-free chicken broth
3 boneless pork chops, about 1/2 inch thick, cut in half

Directions
Spray inside of 4- to 5-quart slow cooker with cooking spray.

Mix all ingredients except pork. Place half of the stuffing mixture in slow cooker; top with pork. Spoon remaining stuffing mixture over pork.
Cover and cook on low heat setting 6 to 8 hours or until pork is tender. Add more water if necessary.

Serving size: 1/2 cup stuffing, plus 1/2 pork chop (about 3 ounces cooked)

Amount Per Serving

Calories
254.7

Total Fat
10.8 g

Cholesterol
26.4 mg

Sodium
445.5 mg

Total Carbs
38.7 g

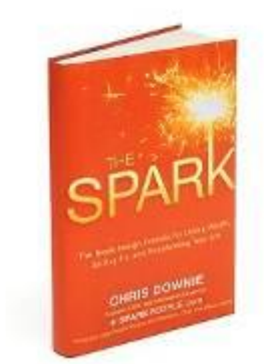
Fiber
2.7 g

Protein
14.0 g

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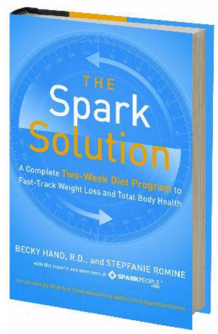
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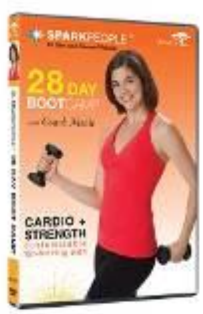
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